



**Office of the Attorney General  
Paul G. Summers**

**CONSUMER ALERT**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ATTORNEY GENERAL WARNS OF CANADIAN  
LOTTERY SCAM**

Tennessee Attorney General Paul G. Summers warned consumers today about a Canadian lottery scheme that has recently targeted Tennessee residents. Deceptive "lottery" operators are using the telephone and direct mail to entice U.S. consumers to claim money from Canadian lotteries.

Some Tennesseans have complained of receiving letters alleging to be from a Canadian Lottery and "Payment Verification" company, claiming consumers have won millions of dollars. The letters inform consumers they are among a handful of winners and the company will deposit the millions directly in the consumer's bank account. There is, however, a caveat...you must pay insurance and/or taxes to claim your prize.

Some so-called winners receive a check in the amount of \$1,000 to \$6,000 from the Canadian lottery company. The consumer is told the money was raised by an unnamed sponsor to pay tax and insurance charges on the consumer's prize. All the consumer has to do is call the number listed in the letter for their account manager and deposit the enclosed check with their bank. To further entice the consumer, the company warns there is a short deadline to claim the prize.

"Unfortunately, by the time you deposit the phony check and it is returned for insufficient funds, you owe the bank fees, and the alleged lottery company already has your bank account information," Attorney General Summers said. "By that time, a thief could have already stolen money from your account before you are even aware there is a problem."

These lottery schemes use victims' bank account numbers to make unauthorized withdrawals and run up additional charges. Attorney General Summers advises consumers, "Never share confidential personal information with companies or individuals you do not know."

Attorney General Summers also offers the following tips:

- \*Never give your Social Security Number, credit card or bank account information unless you are familiar with the company and know why the information is necessary.
- \*Generally speaking, lottery tickets can only be purchased from authorized sellers and if you have not purchased a lottery ticket, you probably have not won a prize.

\*If you participate in one of these types of “lottery” transactions, expect many more mail and telephone offers for lottery or investment “opportunities.” Your name will likely be placed on a “sucker” or “dupe” list that fraudulent companies buy and sell.

If you have received a suspicious lottery announcement, you should contact your local Postmaster to file a complaint against the company. Additionally, you may file a complaint regarding any unfair and deceptive practice with the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs by calling (615) 741-4737 or toll-free 1-(800)-342-8385, or online at [www.state.tn.us/consumer/](http://www.state.tn.us/consumer/). Consumers may also file a complaint against telemarketers with the Tennessee Regulatory Authority by calling (615) 741-2904 or toll-free 1-(800)-342-8359.